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Handwashing

Handwashing is a vital tool in preventing the spread of bacteria and viruses that can cause infections and foodborne illness.

People can be a significant source of harmful microorganisms. Proper handwashing by food employees is necessary to control direct and indirect contamination of food, utensils, and equipment.

When to Wash Hands

- Before starting to work with food, utensils, or equipment
- When switching between raw foods and ready-to-eat foods
- After handling utensils and equipment that contact raw food or are soiled
- After coughing, sneezing, using a tissue, or using tobacco products
- After eating or drinking
- After touching bare human body parts other than clean hands
- After handling animals
- After using the toilet room
- At all other times as necessary during food preparation

Proper Way to Wash Hands

- Before washing hands, remove any jewelry.
- Wash hands only in the sink designated for hand washing.
- Do not wash hands in a service sink or one used for washing utensils.

Follow these five steps:

1. Wet hands and exposed portion of forearms with warm water.
2. Using soap, work up a lather that covers hands and forearms.
3. Vigorously rub hands together for at least **20 seconds**. Pay particular attention to the areas under the fingernails and between the fingers.
4. Rinse hands and forearms in clean water.
5. Dry hands and forearms.

Hand Sanitizers

Use of hand sanitizers is not a substitute for proper hand washing.

Note: This document is for educational purposes only and should not be considered a substitute for studying the Food Code of 1999 and Michigan Food Law of 2000. Food safety information and additional copies of this and other fact sheets are available from the Michigan Department of Agriculture's web page www.michigan.gov/mda